

James Castle (Ed.)



The  
Catcher  
in the Rye  
at MoMA

Tumbleweed

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*The Catcher in the Rye at MoMA*

**Tumbleweed 2006, hardcover, 300 pages, \$ 19**

The *Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)* is an art museum located in midtown Manhattan in New York City. In 2001 James Castle, one of the chief curators, created the so-called *Catcher Gallery*, featuring 257 exhibits related to *The Catcher in the Rye*, the famous novel by J.D. Salinger.

In 2006, much to the surprise of everyone, Castle was actually persuaded by Salinger himself to publish the present book in which 187 of the 257 exhibits are introduced and commented on.<sup>44</sup>

Although it is well-nigh impossible I have tried hard to select five pieces of art from the book which might give the reader some idea of the vast range of *Catcher* exhibits found at *MoMA*.

The first one (exhibit #56) refers to a book written by D.B., Holden's brother.<sup>45</sup> It is an anthology of short stories called *The Secret Goldfish*, the best one, in Holden's view, being "The Secret Goldfish".<sup>46</sup> The rather small painting (the artist remains anonymous) is introduced by the following explanation:

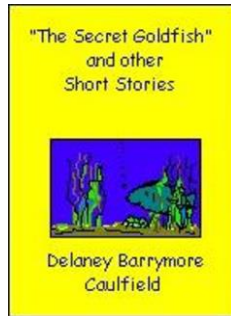
Ever since reading *The Catcher in the Rye*  
for the first time I had been wondering  
what the initials "D.B." might stand  
for. Then, last Friday at Moe's Books in  
Berkeley, I came across this book cover.

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<sup>44</sup> It is well-known that Salinger was something of a recluse, usually objecting to any kind of publicity whatsoever.

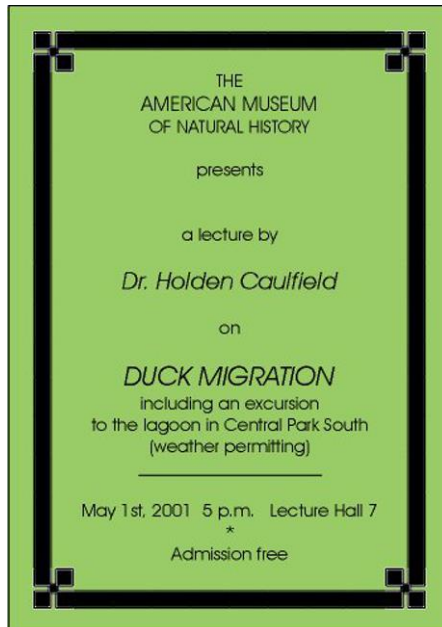
<sup>45</sup> Holden Caulfield is the seventeen-year-old narrator and protagonist of the novel.

<sup>46</sup> Cp. the introductory chapter of the *Catcher*.



The next one, a poster by Carl Pencey (exhibit #83), is introduced as follows:

I got the idea for this poster because someone sent me an email, suggesting a book on duck migration as a present for Holden.



Regarding exhibit #122, Jimmy Coburn, the artist, claims:

This newspaper clipping, apparently featuring an ad in a New York paper, was bought by a friend of mine at an ebay auction on January 4, 2005, for \$ 502 (including postage). According to the seller it is "an original piece of J.D. Salinger memorabilia" which he claims he bought off Warren French, author of *J.D. Salinger, Revisited*.

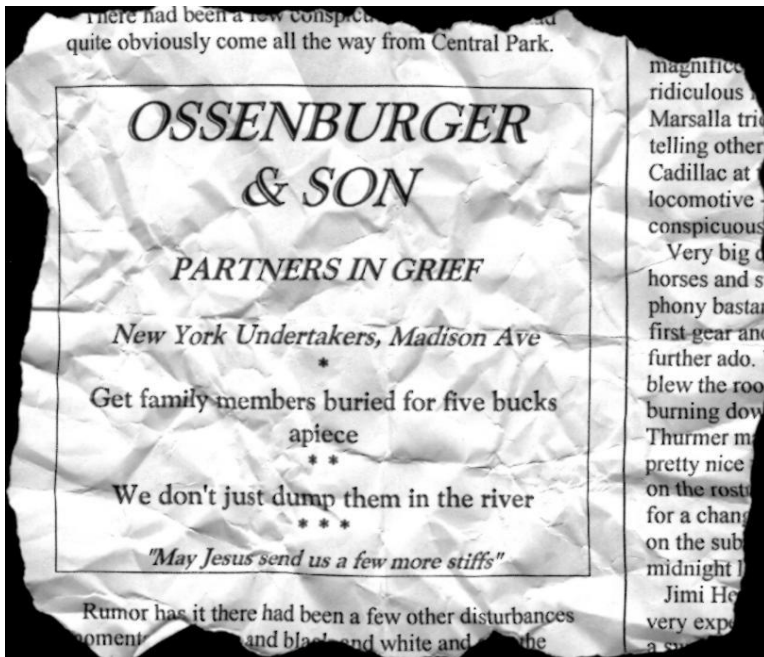
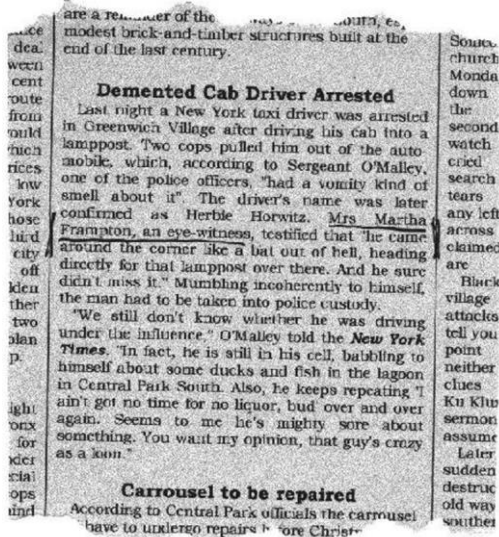


Exhibit #134 was created by Henry Frampton, who comments:

On January 23, 2001, I found the following somewhat crumpled newspaper clipping in the diary of my late aunt, Mrs Martha Frampton. Strictly speaking, this item may not be a piece of art, but upon second thoughts I decided to offer it to MoMA nevertheless.



Last but certainly not least, I would like to present exhibit #157 (cp. also the front cover) by the noted New York literary critic Herman C. Applebaum, author of the highly-acclaimed book *Kings and Things in the Back Row*. He comments:

I tried to reconstruct the famous scene from the *Catcher* (chapter 11) in which Holden remembers playing checkers with Jane Gallagher, who for some reason kept all her kings in the back row. I have to admit I find the symbolic significance overwhelming.

Internal evidence suggests that the red square onto which Jane's tear "plopped", as Holden recalls, may have been the one in the upper right corner. Note also the whisky glass in the background, which was possibly used by the "booze hound".



If you happen to live in New York, you can of course go to *MoMA* and admire all the 257 exhibits. If you don't, this book is absolutely recommended for all the *Catcher* fans out there – and there must still be quite a few, though this fascinating novel was written way back in 1951.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Alternatively, you can find some of the exhibits on YouTube: “The Catcher in the Rye Museum – fascinating memorabilia – J.D. Salinger”  
URL: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hV0V2\\_57MR8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hV0V2_57MR8)